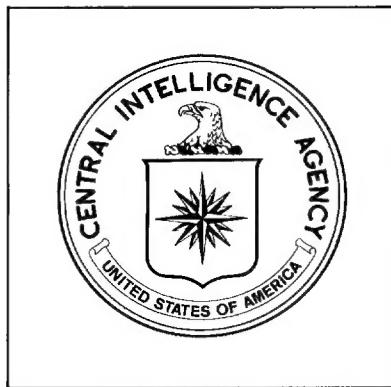


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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Waiting for Brezhnev

A Soviet diplomat in Belgrade noted recently that no Brezhnev visit to Yugoslavia is on the immediate horizon, but that the subject would be discussed with Yugoslav Premier Bijedic when he is in the USSR this month. He suggested that such a visit might be appropriate as a "balance" to President Ford's proposed trip to Belgrade next summer.

Rumors of an impending Brezhnev visit have been circulating in Belgrade since last fall. At one time it looked as though the Soviet leader would stop in Yugoslavia on his way to or from the Middle East during the winter. Brezhnev's health may have upset plans for a Yugoslav trip, but it is also possible that Belgrade is dragging its feet. One problem facing both sides is that Yugoslavia is expected to demand a forthright Soviet affirmation of previous pledges of noninterference in Yugoslav affairs in light of the Cominformist revelations. The Soviets would be willing to make such a pledge in general terms, but obviously would hope to avoid acknowledging even an implicit link with the Cominformists. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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VE Ceremonies in Czechoslovakia:
A Volte-Face

Prague will break a long-standing precedent next month by officially recognizing the US role in liberating Czechoslovakia during World War II.

The Soviet role in the liberation will, as always, receive the lion's share of praise. Czechoslovak officials informed the US embassy on April 1, however, that delegations from the ministries of foreign affairs and national defense, plus local Czech authorities, will participate in ceremonies that the embassy has planned for May 7 to commemorate the liberation of western Bohemia by the US Third Army.

Prague's *volte-face* is consistent with the regime's earlier decision to mute the annual propaganda blast questioning the need for the heavy bombing of western Bohemian cities by US planes after the war was "effectively" over. Each of these decisions honors detente's atmospherics, and they also reflect Moscow's attempts to drum up support for the 30th VE anniversary. They have the further benefit of showing Prague's continued good faith in the improvement of relations with Washington, which are still deadlocked over the claims issue. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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~~SECRET SPOKE~~From Russia, with Typewriter

The recent arrival in the US of Yulian Semenov, here to collect material for a series of *Pravda* articles on the "Soviet-American struggle against Hitlerism," provides a welcome relief from the steady stream of colorless Soviet bureaucrats visiting the US. Sometimes described as the Russian Ian Fleming, Semenov is one of the best known Soviet authors of spy stories and "whodunits," two genres that have gained a measure of official Soviet acceptance in recent years as part of an effort to increase public vigilance against dangerous foreign influences and "hooliganism."

Semenov is the author of a number of books on the Cheka and KGB and a detective story entitled "Petrovka-38" (the address of Moscow police headquarters). His most popular recent work is "Seventeen Flashes of Spring," a screenplay that became the talk of Moscow in 1973, when it was serialized on Soviet television. The plot of that epic centered on the World War II exploits of a Soviet superspy, who confounded double-dealing Americans and defied death at every turn.

For over a decade following Khrushchev's denigration of Stalin, much of Semenov's output, especially for the stage, dealt with the psychological impact on society and on the individual of the toppling of an idol. Semenov concentrated particularly on Stalin's "crimes" against ranking military leaders purged in the 1930s, and on the efforts of their children to salvage meaningful lives. Since the later 1960s, Semenov's writing has shied away from these anti-Stalinist political overtones, in line with the Brezhnev regime's "re-assessment" of the Soviet dictator's virtues. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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